DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 354 CS 206 391

AUTHOR Whitney, D. Charles; Goldman, Steven
TITLE Public Understanding of the News Business: A Replication.
PUB DATE Aug 81
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism (64th, East Lansing, MI, August 8-11, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; College Students; Comparative Analysis; *Knowledge Level; *Media Research; *News Media; Newspapers; Perception; Television; Television Viewing
IDENTIFIERS *Media Use

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, to replicate research undertaken in Columbus, Ohio, that measured public knowledge about newspapers and television news business. Data were collected through telephone interviews with 341 heads of households. The results supported the findings of the earlier research. Among the findings of the studies are the following: (1) the public knew more about television than about newspapers and was more knowledgeable about licensing than about ownership, (2) media knowledge resulted from exposure to print media, and (3) education exerts both independent effects on media knowledge and indirect effects by increasing the likelihood of exposure to print media. Although differences in the studies' findings were slight, one variation was noteworthy: while the Columbus study found that the viewing of local television news was negatively related to media knowledge, the Champaign study found no such relationship. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEWS BUSINESS: A REPLICATION

D. Charles Whitney and Steven Goldman

Institute of Communications Research
University of Illinois
222B Armory Building
505 E. Armory St.
Champaign, IL 61820
(217) 333-1549

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

D. Charles Whitney
Steven Goldman

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

ED203354

CS206391

ABSTRACT

Relatively few studies have explored public knowledge about the mass media, and almost none have concerned themselves with covariates, antecedents and consequences of such knowledge. One such study, however, (Becker, Whitney and Collins, 1980) did report moderately low and highly variable levels of public knowledge of the news business, with demographic variables predicting media attention and impacting directly on media knowledge, while print media attention predicted media knowledge, and media knowledge was related to criticism of the media. For reasons outlined in the paper, the study merited replication, and that replication is reported here. In general, through direct comparison of results, of zero-order and partial correlations, of path coefficients and structural coefficients, this paper suggests that the original findings and relationships were accurately assessed. It is suggested that where differences between the two studies are found, they may be attributable to weaknesses in conceptualization and measurement in both studies.

Paper presented to the Mass Communication and Society Division, Association for Education in Journalism convention, Michigan State University, August, 1981.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEWS BUSINESS: A REPLICATION

There is a surprising paucity of information available about what people know about how the news media work, about how news is gathered and disseminated, by whom this is done, and how media are organized; despite decades of research on the effects of the media themselves, including an insistence in the past ten years that perhaps the major effect of media is increasing public knowledge, we know little about public knowledge about the news business.

Brinton, Bush and Newell (1957) concluded their study the newspaper and its public by noting "an appalling ignorance about newspapers--their objectives, motivations, and procedures, "though their study concerned itself more with studying the public's attitudes toward the press than with its knowledge about the press.

More recently, Becker, Whitney and Collins (1980) reported three survey studies which concluded that "there are significant gaps in public understanding of the news business." The Becker, et al., study also noted that survey respondents were more knowledgeable about television stations than about newspapers, that they were least well informed about ownership, more knowledgeable about licensing and most knowledgeable about finances. Knowledge about media, moreover, was associated with education; use of print, but not broadcast media for news; attention to media content about media, including watching of television programs such as "Lou Grant" and motion pictures such as "All the President's Men"; and personal contact with persons working for newspapers and television stations. Possible consequences of media knowledge were also explored, and the following results reported: Knowledge about media is positively related to reliance on newspapers for national and local news, negatively related to reliance on newspapers for national and local news, negatively related with confidence

in those producing news for local newspapers and television and negatively with feeling that newspapers and television make the world seem more complicated than it is.

The Becker, et al., studies break new ground in understanding what people know about the news business. For a variety of reasons, however, and as the authors themselves point out, these studies represent only a first step. We decided, therefore, to execute a replication of the studies.

Replication is virtually always pointed to as a norm for social science (cf. Bailey, 1978; Phillips, 1970; Kerlinger, 1973) but it is one honored more in articulation than in practice. Specifically, the Becker, et al., studies are worthy of replication for at least the following reasons:

1) All of the studies were conducted within an eight-month period within the same community, Columbus, Ohio. While Columbus, Ohio, is in many respects an ideal community in which to conduct research, as it closely mirrors U.S. distributions of the population in race,[1] education, income and occupation, it is but one locality. As Tichenor and his colleagues (Olien, Donohue and Tichenor, 1978; Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1980) have noted, community structures and the media structures within them vary, and "the configuration of information available to the average citizen tends to differ sharply from one community to another." (Olien, Donohue and Tichenor, 1978: 454). Moreover, Columbus is among a relatively small number of communities marked by a newspaper joint operating agreement, and one element in the Becker, et al., index of media knowledge is a response to a question whether people know whether the local newspapers are owned by the same people (incorrect) or by different companies (correct). Thus this component of "knowledge" would vary in communities with a different structure of ownership.

2) One finding in the Becker, et al., study was counter to a hypothesized relationship, and significantly so. That finding was that confidence in those producing both local newspaper and television news was negatively related to knowledge about media. This zero-order relationship stands in contrast to a second finding, again zero-order, that knowledge is negatively related with agreeing that television news and newspaper news make the world seem more complicated than it is, and these latter findings were also statistically significant. For convenience's sake, the first of these variables, confidence, may be labeled a "credibility" variable, while the second may be termed a "criticism" variable.[2] On their face, it would seem that they should be positively related, and yet here they appear not to be; at the very least, this relationship is worthy of further study.

Since this study is a relatively straightforward replication, no hypotheses are proposed; in general, it was our expectation that the findings of the Becker, et al., study would consistently apply in a different research locale.

The replication was a relatively strict one, in that the same sampling plan, data collection method and plan of analysis were used, as were many of the same questions. The replication study was conducted in Champaign and Urbana, contiguous cities in east central Illinois which serve as a light manufacturing, regional agricultural trade area of about 100,000 population, and home of the University of Illinois. Demographic comparisons between Columbus, Ohio and the Champaign-Urbana samples show three differences: in the Illinois sample there are fewer nonwhites, substantially more students (about a third of the entire sample) and a slightly higher education level: Columbus median education was 12.8 years; in Champaign-Urbana, the median was 14.5 years. Because we suspected that the over-representation of college students might distort some results, results are

reported both on the full Champaign-Urbana sample and the nonstudents subsample. Moreover, the media environment of the two locales varies: Champaign-Urbana is home to about half the number of media outlets as Columbus: there are nine local radio stations, one cable television franchise, two local network-affiliated television stations with a third in Decatur, Illinois, 40 miles away but clearly receivable, and but one newspaper, an evening paper, locally owned and not part of a chain.[3] While Chicago daily newspapers are readily available in the market, they are not home-delivered.

The survey, conducted in October 1979, was an omnibus public opinion survey conducted by telephone by 35 specially-trained graduate and undergraduate journalism and communications students enrolled in precision journalism and public opinion courses at the University of Illinois. The sample was drawn by random digit dialing, and 341 male and female household heads residing within the city limits of Champaign and Urbana were contacted. The response rate was 62 percent. These procedures closely match the methods employed in the Columbus studies.[4] Most questions were worded as they had been in the Columbus study. As previously noted, in Columbus, respondents were asked whether the local newspapers were jointly or separately owned; in the Champaign-Urbana study, respondents were asked a newspaper ownership item that paralleled the television ownership question: "Some people think that the local newspaper is owned by people who live in Champaign and Urbana. Other people think that the newspaper is owned by a company with headquarters outside this area. Which do you think is true, or don't you know for sure?" We did not, however, ask the advertising questions asked in the Columbus study, since three-quarters of the sample correctly answered the newspaper advertising question and almost seven-eighths of the Columbus sample correctly answered the television financing question; these results leave little variation to explain. Instead, we asked how many worked for one of the local

television stations. A "correct" answer on these questions was an answer falling within a range assigned by the researchers based on the actual number of editorial employees at each (25 at the newspaper, 12 at the television station).

RESULTS

The percentages of the sample correctly answering the various media-knowledge questions are shown in Table 1, both for the full sample and with the relatively transient students excluded; for comparison, percentages correctly answering media knowledge questions from the first and largest Columbus survey are also shown.

Table 1 about here

As the data in Table 1 indicate, on the three questions on which the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana studies are directly comparable (TV ownership, newspaper and TV licensing) the results from the two studies are stunningly similar. A higher proportion of the Champaign-Urbana household heads answer the newspaper ownership question correctly, no doubt because the ownership pattern in Champaign-Urbana is "simpler" than is the case in Columbus. Interestingly, the newspaper ownership question in the present study is the only knowledge item that permanent residents score better on than do the relatively transient students; while an argument might be made that it is the only item of the first four in which specific local knowledge is required, since in all communities the licensing answers are the same, and in most the networks do not own the television stations, it should be noted that "local" residents are indifferentiable from the students on answering the "number of reporters" items.

Scores on the indexes are not directly comparable across the two locales, since a relatively "hard" item in the Illinois study has replaced a relatively "easy" item in the Ohio study; nonetheless, the Becker, et al., conclusion that people appear to be more knowledgeable about television than about newspapers is supported.

As were Becker, et al., we were interested in possible correlates of media knowledge. While some of the correlates, particularly demographics and media use variables, may clearly be considered antecedents of media knowledge, the relationship between certain items and knowledge may not clearly be antecedent. Confidence in media and criticism of them clearly covary with media knowledge, but, as Becker, et al. note, and as we discuss below, causal ordering is difficult. Nonetheless, the pattern of relationship between media knowledge and some covariates noted in Table 2 is very similar to that found in the Columbus studies.

Table 2 about here

However, some differences are apparent. In the Columbus study, use of print media predicts knowledge, a correlation that survives partialling out the effect of education; the same is true in the Illinois study, though news magazine use is a stronger predictor than use of newspapers, and interestingly, once students are removed from the sample, the correlation between newspaper readership and media knowledge does not quite reach statistical significance. As in the Columbus study, there is virtually no relationship between frequency of watching either local or network news and media knowledge in the full sample, though a modest insignificant negative relationship between knowledge and local watching appears in the nonstudent subsample.

Moreover, as expected, and was also noted in the Columbus study, media knowledge covaries with political knowledge as indexed by identification of political leaders; this is a relatively strong relationship, and one that survives a control for education, which is itself, as Table 2 notes, relatively strongly correlated with media knowledge.

Demographic correlates of knowledge, some tabled here and some not, are consistent with Columbus findings and/or with usual predictions. Those owning their places of residence are more knowledgeable than renters, males more than females. Age, however, and as with the Columbus study, exerts curvilinear effects, with the middle third of the sample the most knowledgeable and the youngest third the least knowledgeable. Understanding the effects of age, as is frequently the case, requires multivariate analysis to remove its covariation with education.

Also of interest are possible consequences of media knowledge. Table 3 shows Columbus and Champaign full-sample results for relationships between those high and low in media knowledge and several possible consequences: reliance on television or newspapers for local and national news, confidence in television and newspapers, and a "criticism" item for newspapers and television, or whether people feel that those media make the world seem more complicated than it is.

Table 3 about here

It will be recalled that the Columbus and Champaign indices are not directly comparable, in that they are constructed of different questions correctly answered by different proportions of individuals. While virtually all the patterns discovered in the Columbus studies are replicated in the Champaign-Urbana results,

all are attenuated and none is significant using a difference of proportions test. Thus the Columbus findings of reliance on newspapers, as opposed to other media, being related to high media knowledge is supported in three of four comparisons here, but only weakly so. The significant Columbus findings from the first and largest of the Columbus studies that confidence in people producing the news for television and newspapers is negatively predictable from media knowledge are in the same direction, in three of four cases presented here, but only weakly so; moreover, while results in the same direction were found in the same direction in two other Columbus studies, there too significance could not be attained for the finding. Finally, findings from the third Columbus study that those high in media knowledge are less likely to agree that television and newspapers make the world more complicated than it really is are replicated in Champaign-Urbana, but again the relationship does not reach statistical significance. It will be argued below that with stronger measures, this final relationship might be more vigorous.

It is impossible to eliminate, in the zero-order analyses or even by partialing on the single variable of education, the possibility that the relationships in Table 2 and 3 are spurious. We have therefore attempted much the same path analysis as Becker, et al., executed in the Columbus study. An index consisting of the final two items in Table 3, dealing with criticism of the media, was the criterion variable as it had been in the Columbus study. Demographic variables of age, sex and education were the first elements in the model. (Race, used in Columbus, was not used here because of the small number of non-whites. There were only 36 non-whites in the sample, including only 22 blacks.) The demograpnhic variables were expected to impact on the criterion variable, criticism, only through media use and media knowledge. Contact with media personnel variables used in the Columbus study were not available, nor were measures of viewing of TV shows about media.

Intervening variables regressed on media knowledge[5] in the Illinois study were local television news viewing, newspaper readership and newsmagazine readership. Results for both the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana analyses are shown in Fig. 1. Nonsignificant beta weights, with the exception in the Champaign study of the beta between criticism and knowledge, have been deleted. In each of the three path models, variables at the left of the variable at the start of a path have not been entered as controls. For example, the .23 beta weight between newsmagazine use and knowledge in Fig. 1 (c) does not reflect a control for age, sex and education, but it does reflect controls for newspaper and local television use. Further, the betas on direct paths between the exogenous variables of age, sex and education reflect controls for newspaper, television and newsmagazine use, as well as for the other exogenous variables in the model.

Fig. 1 about here

We will first discuss the Becker, et al., model and then compare its findings with our own. Becker, et. al. find a significant beta coefficient from media knowledge to media criticism and find no direct effects from other variables in the model to criticism. We find a nonsignificant beta coefficient from knowledge to criticism, in the same direction as Becker, et al., and likewise no direct effects from other variables in the model to criticism.

Four of five Columbus media "use" variables, when the effects of the others in the model are controlled, show significant paths to media knowledge. Only local TV news viewing does not. Our data show a similar pattern on the comparison variables for which we have measures: the print use variables show significant beta weights, while local TV use does not, though in the nonstudent subsample, newspaper use also drops out. The exception, local TV use, is similar in all three models, however, in that not only is it slight and nonsignificant, but it

is uniformly negative.

The demographic variables in the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana studies demonstrate similar relationships, with education impacting directly on knowledge and through newsmagazine use; unlike the Columbus study, however, a direct path is found from education to newspaper use, whether or not students are included. In both studies, age is significantly related to both newspaper reading and local TV use but not directly to knowledge. Sex behaves differently in the two studies; in the Columbus study, it shows an independent direct effect on knowledge as well as on newsmagazine use; it shows only the direct independent effect on knowledge in the Illinois study, and then only in the full-sample study, not in the nonstudent-only subsample; though the beta coefficient between sex and media knowledge in the nonstudent subsample is larger (beta = .13) than in the Columbus study (beta = .09), the smaller sample size leads to a finding of nonsignificance in the Champaign-Urbana results.

A Further Replication

A more strict replication, employing structural coefficients, rather than path coefficients, is reported below. Structural coefficients are often favored by sociologists and econometricians when comparing a model across two samples. Path coefficients are standardized for a given sample of observations, so their values are dependent on that sample. Structural coefficients are the unstandardized regression B-values in the model's predictive equation. These structural coefficients are expected to better represent the underlying relationships proposed in the model (Duncan, 1975; Hanushek and Jackson, 1977). Using this approach, the structural coefficients in a given model should remain equal, within confidence limits, across different samples and times, if the model is accurate. This more strict comparison of the two studies limits the path model to only the variables common to both the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana study. This requires removing from the Columbus study race, viewing tv shows about the media, and personal contact with media workers. The resulting model is shown in Figure 2.

Eight variables are in this model:

Age
Education level
Sex (male coded as high)
Newspaper reading (days per week)
Local tv news viewing (days per week)
Newsmagazine reading (yes coded as high)
Media knowledge (number of correct answers to six knowledge items -- see Table 1)
Media criticism (whether tv, newspapers, or both, make the world seem more complicated than it is -- see see Table 3)

As in the previous models, the hypotheses call for the exogenous, demographic variables (age, sex, and education) to have an impact on the criterion variable, media criticism, only indirectly through media knowledge, and through associated effects through the three endogenous, media use variables (newspapers, local tv

news, and newsmagazines). These media use variables were expected to affect media criticism only indirectly through media knowledge.

Now that the models for the two city-samples are identical, the path coefficients and structural coefficients may be directly compared. While the standardized path coefficients (beta) may vary for each city-sample, the unstandardized structural coefficient should remain constant if the underlying relationships proposed by the model are valid.

A series of multiple regression analyses were performed in the same manner as Becker, et al describe First, a simple regression of media knowledge on media criticism produces values for that path. Following the conclusions of the Becker, et al, model, no direct effects of the other six variables were tested. Next, the paths from age, education, and sex to media knowledge were computed with media use variables as controls. Then, the paths from each of the three media use variables to media knowledge were calculated, with only the remaining two media use scales used as controls. Finally, for each of the demographic variables, paths to each of the media use items were calculated.

Criteria for success of the replication were: For structural coefficients, that the Champaign-Urbana B-coefficient lie within the 95% confidence interval of the Columbus B-coefficient. For the path coefficients, that $p \leq .05$ for the beta values. A complete tabulation of structural and path coefficients, confidence intervals and significance levels for each city-sample is presented in Table 4.

Looking at path coefficients alone (Figure 2), six paths show betas that are not similarly significant or non-significant across the two city-samples. Yet on the structural coefficient level (values within parentheses in Figure 2), fourteen of sixteen paths replicate with statistically-equivalent B-values, and a fifteenth path (sex-to-media knowledge) is very close to successful replication.

Summary and Conclusions

The present study was intended as a replication of three Columbus, Ohio, studies on public knowledge about newspapers and television. In large part, the findings of the Columbus studies, when transferred to a different locale, are supported, in some cases in somewhat attenuated form. Most clear is that the public knows more about television than about newspapers, and are more knowledgable about licensing than ownership. Both sets of data support the idea that media knowledge results from exposure to print media, and that education exerts both independent effects on media knowledge, and indirect effects through increasing the likelihood of exposure to print media.

Confidence items, which had not replicated across the three Columbus studies, were not productive in this study, either. Two "media criticism" items which had proved useful in the Columbus work showed mixed results in the later study. Failure to replicate these findings, it is suggested, may well be the result of inadequate conceptualization and measurement. To speculate for a moment, it is quite likely that the "complexity" constructs that underlie these items are multidimensional, and there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the dimensions operate in the same way across media and from local to national media.

In the Columbus study, viewing of local television news was found to be negatively related to media knowledge; that relationship does not replicate significantly at the path coefficient level, and in the present study the relationship between TV news viewing, either local or national, and media knowledge, is parctically non-existent. These "non-findings" or slightly negative findings are consistent with a body of literature showing similar relationships (also at the path coefficient level) between television news

attention and political knowledge (cf. Becker, Sobowale and Casey, 1980; Becker and Whitney, 1980; Clarke and Fredin, 1978 and sources cited therein).

For the full models tested, there are also mixed results. The models presented in Figure 1 show differing beta values and significant paths between city-samples, and even in a subsample of the same city.

The more comparable models in Figure 2 show heartening results. While the path beta values for each city-sample may vary, the underlying structural coefficient is equivalent in fourteen of sixteen paths tested. Generally, the Champaign-Urbana B-values are at the upper end of the Columbus 95% confidence interval, but further replications may produce more steady structural coefficients.

Moreover, these studies barely illuminate information the public may hold about the media; they tap relatively few dimensions about what one might or should know, or need to know, about how the mass media function. As Becker, Whitney and Collins have earlier noted, studies of this sort are but rough beginnings, and additional work, at the conceptual and measurement levels in particular, seems of considerable merit.

Footnotes

[1]In percent nonwhite, at least. The nonwhite population of Columbus is virtually all black, with minimal representations of Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians.

[2]This follows the Becker, et al., terminology.

[3]A morning daily, part of the Lindsay-Schaub chain, had ceased publication about six months before the survey.

[4]All three Columbus surveys were telephone surveys conducted by journalism students; two of the studies were systematic probability samples of the Columbus telephone directory, in which heads of household, defined identically with the present survey, were interviewed. The third Columbus survey was of Franklin County registered voters. Response rates in the three Columbus studies were 68%, 66% and 63%.

[5]Media knowledge in the Columbus path model in Fig. 1 (a) is constructed from a different index from the one referred to in Tables 1-3. The knowledge index in the Columbus path model includes the newspaper and television ownership, licensing and financing items and includes as well correct identifications of local television reporter-anchorpersons, a local newspaper editor and a local newspaper publisher.

References:

Bailey, Kenneth D.
1978 Methods of Social Research. New York: Free Press.

Becker, Lee B.; D. Charles Whitney and Erik L. Collins.
1980 "Public Understanding of How the News Media Operate." Journalism Quarterly 57(4):571-78,605.

Becker, Lee B.; Idowu Sobowale and William E. Casey.
1980 "Newspaper and Television Dependencies: Effects of Evaluation on Public Officials." Journal of Broadcasting 23(4):465-75.

Becker, Lee B. and D. Charles Whitney.
1980 "Effects of Media Dependencies: Audience Assessment of Government." Communication Research 7(1):95-120.

Brinton, James E.; Chilton R. Bush and Thomas M. Newell.
1957 The Newspaper and Its Public. Stanford, CA: Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University.

Clarke, Peter and Eric Fredin.
1978 "Newspapers, Television and Political Reasoning." Public Opinion Quarterly 42(2): 143-60.

Duncan, Otis Dudley.
1975 Introduction to Structural Equation Models. New York: Academic Press.

Hanushek, Eric and John Jackson.
1977 Statistical Methods for Social Scientists. New York: Academic Press.

Kerlinger, Fred N.
1973 Foundations of Behavioral Research. 2nd ed. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Olien, Clarice N.; George A. Donohue and Phillip J. Tichenor.
1978 "Community Structure and Media Use." Journalism Quarterly 55(3):445-55.

Phillips, Bernard S.
1970 Social Research: Strategy and Tactics. New York: Macmillan.

Tichenor, Phillip J.; George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien.
1980 Community Conflict and the Press. Becerly Hills, CA: Sage.

TABLE 1

Knowledge of the media, in Champaign-Urbana, including and excluding students, October 1979, and in Columbus, Ohio, May 1978. Columns report percent correct answers.

	Champaign-Urbana		
	Full Sample (n=341)	Excluding Students (n=224)	Columbus (n=616)
Know local newspaper locally (C-U)/ independently (Cols.) owned:	42.2	53.6	30.9
Know local TV stations are not network owned:	55.7	55.8	57.8
Know license not required for newspapers:	50.4	51.3	46.8
Know license is required for TV	80.6	79.0	79.3
Know most newspaper revenue comes from advertising:	*	*	75.8
Know most TV revenue comes from advertising	*	*	85.2
Know how many reporters work for local newspaper	48.7	46.9	*
Know how many reporters work for local TV	48.7	49.1	*
Know all three newspaper answers	13.5	17.0	15.4
Know all three TV answers	28.7	29.0	47.4
Know at least five answers to six media questions	22.9	26.4	35.1

*Question not asked

TABLE 2

Media knowledge and some covariates

	Full sample:		Excluding students:	
	Pearson r with media knowledge	Partialling on education	Pearson r with media knowledge	Partialling on education
Newspaper reading: days per week	.16	.15	.08	.09
Local TV news: days per week	.00	.03	-.08	-.02
Network TV news: days per week	.08	.07	.04	.03
Regular news magazine readership: (yes/no)	.19	.13	.22	.18
Education	.26	--	.28	--
Political knowledge[a]	.48	.30	.44	.38
Own/rent dwelling place	.17	.21	.18	.22

[a]Index asking respondents to identify their local mayor, local member of the U.S. House, Illinois senators and U.S. secretary of state.

r's attain significance at or past .05 level in column 1 and 2 if they are .10 or greater, in columns 3 and 4 at .14 or greater.

Table 3

Possible Consequences of Media Knowledge

	Columbus		Champaign-Urbana Full Sample		Champaign-Urbana Nonstudent	
	Low Knowl. (n=223)+	High Knowl. (n=393)	Low Knowl. (n=187)	High Knowl. (n=154)	Low Knowl. (n=116)	High Knowl. (n=108)
Rely on newspaper for national news	20.7%	34.9%[a]	14.4%	15.8%	12%	15.6%
Rely on newspaper for local news	27.1	43.8[a]	26.9	25.5	22.3	24.5
Has great deal of confidence in people producing news for local newspaper	35.5	26.3[b]	11.4	9.9	12.7	13.2
Has great deal of confidence in people producing news for local TV	46.8	35.6[b]	15	13.2	17	15.6
Has great deal of confidence in people producing news for network TV	44.7 (n=156)+	39.7 (n=179)	*	*	*	*
Say newspapers make world more complicated than it is	33.3	18.7[a]	12.9	8.8	14.7	11.2
Say TV makes world more complicated than it is	33.6	18.5[a]	14.4	10.5	16.5	13.4

+First five Columbus questions are from the May 1978 study; last two are from the January 1979 study.

[a]Significant at the .05 level using a difference of proportions test.

[b]Significant at the .05 level using a difference of proportions test, but in direction opposite of prediction.

*Question not asked.

Table 4: Coefficients for models in Figure 2
Columbus (N=253) and Champaign-Urbana (N=331) samples

Path	Columbus B	Columbus 95% Conf. Int.	Champaign-Urbana B	Champaign-Urbana In CI?*	Columbus beta	Columbus sig.	Champaign-Urbana beta	Champaign-Urbana sig.
Age--Newspaper days	.05	.03 , .06	.04	Y	.28	.001	.27	.001
Age--Local TV news	.04	.03 , .06	.06	Y	.29	.001	.37	.001
Age--Newsmagazines	-.002	-.006, .001	.001	Y	-.08	n.s.	.04	n.s.
Sex--Newspaper days	.81	.18 ,1.44	.10	N	.15	.012	.02	n.s.
Sex--Local TV news	-.35	-.94 , .24	.23	Y	-.07	n.s.	-.04	n.s.
Sex--Newsmagazines	.13	.01 , .25	.04	Y	.13	.029	.04	n.s.
Educ--Newspaper days	.10	-.004, .21	.09	Y	.11	n.s.	.11	n.s.
Educ--Local TV news	-.08	-.18 , .03	-.06	Y	-.09	n.s.	- 06	n.s.
Educ--Newsmagazines	.04	.02 , .06	.05	Y	.24	.001	.25	.001
Age--Media knowledge	.005	-.006, .016	.002	Y	.05	n.s.	.02	n.s.
Sex--Media knowledge	.26	-.07 , .60	.63	N	.09	n.s.	.21	n.s.
Educ--Media knowledge	.11	.05 , .17	.10	Y	.22	.001	.18	.001
Newspaper--Knowledge	.16	.09 , .22	.10	Y	.29	.001	.16	.005
Local TV--Knowledge	-.10	-.17 ,-.03	-.02	Y	-.18	.003	-.04	n.s.
Newsmagazines--Knowledge	.52	.19 , .87	.50	Y	.18	.003	.17	.002
Knowledge--Criticism	-.13	-.20 ,-.04	-.04	Y	-.23	.002	-.09	n.s.

*Is C-U B-value within 95% Confidence Interval for Columbus B-value on this path?

FIG. 1: Path models for the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana media knowledge studies*

Fig. 1(a): Columbus, Ohio, January 1979 (n=309)

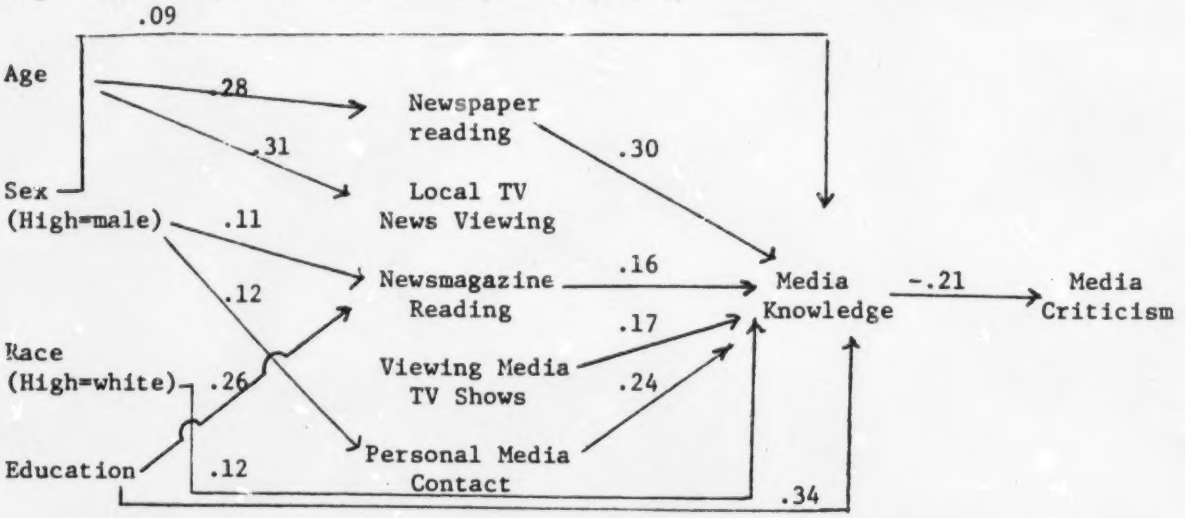


Fig. 1(b): Champaign-Urbana, Ill., October 1980, full sample (n=331)

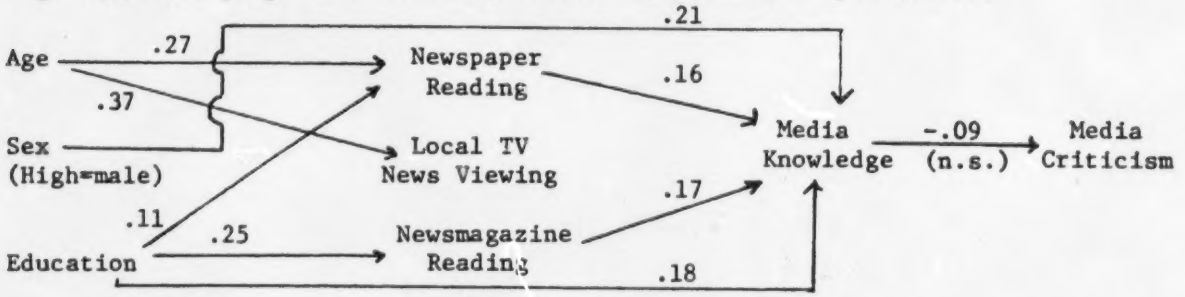
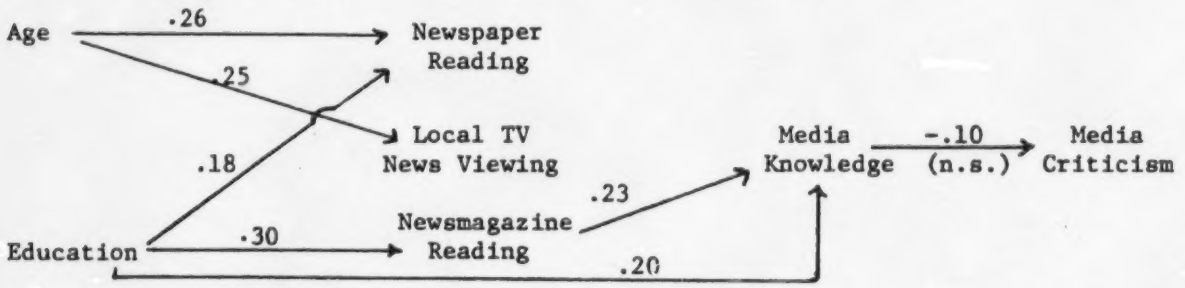


Fig. 1(c): Champaign-Urbana, nonstudent subsample (n=214)



*Entries are beta weights. Variables on the left side of a reported weight have not been entered as a control. For example, the .30 beta in Fig. 1(a) between newspaper reading and media knowledge does not reflect a control for age, etc., though it reflects controls for TV news viewing, etc. The beta for sex and media knowledge reflects controls for newspaper reading, etc. as well as for age, race and education. Nonsignificant betas have been deleted.

FIG. 2: Structural coefficients for the Columbus and Champaign-Urbana media knowledge studies.

Fig. 2a: Columbus, Ohio, January 1979 (n=253):

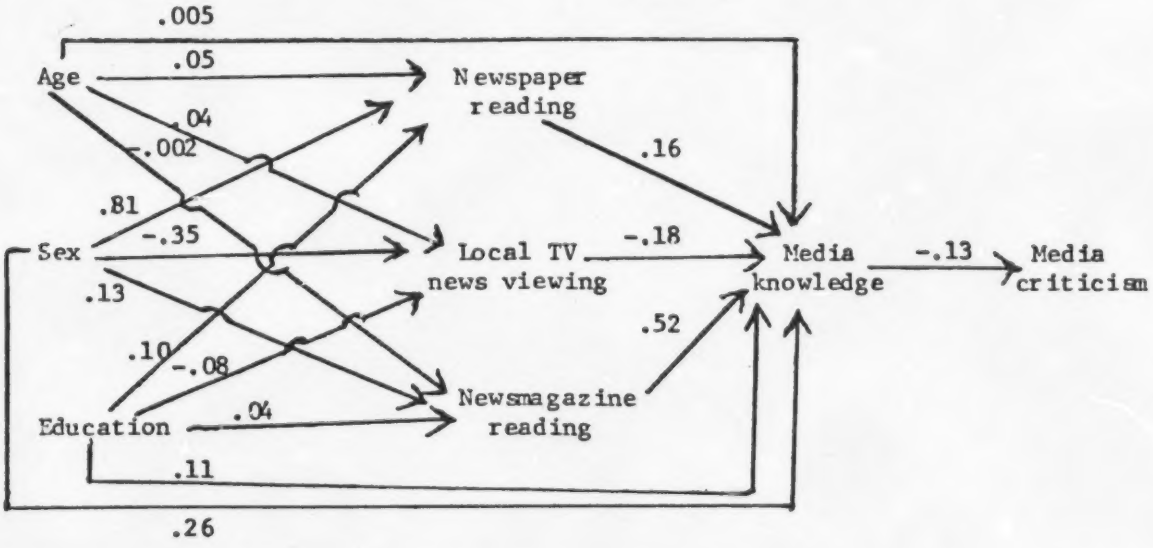
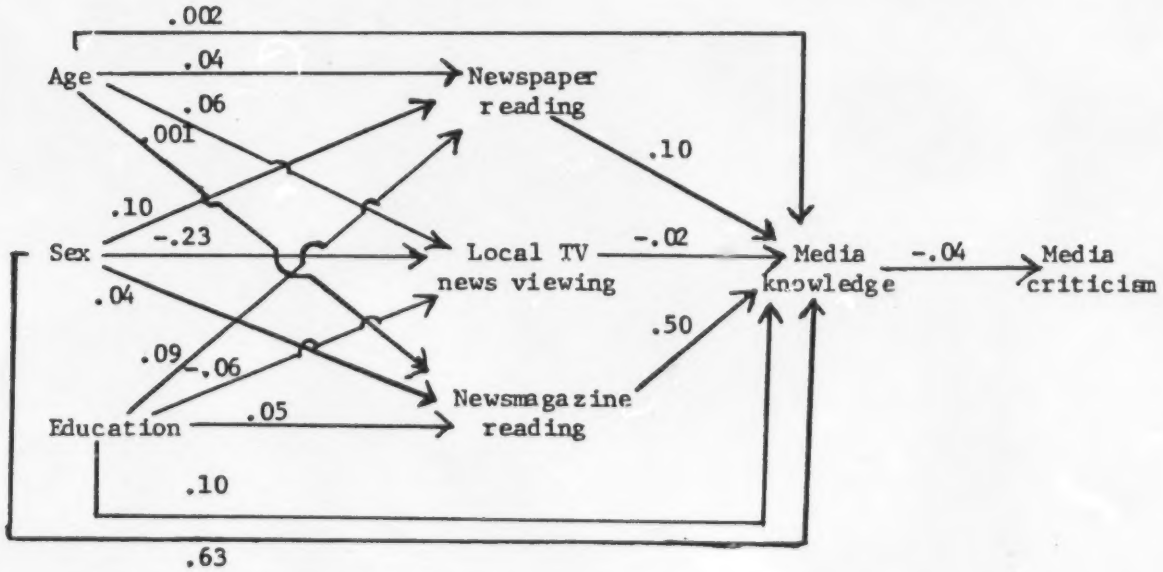


Fig. 2b: Champaign-Urbana, Ill., October 1980 full sample (n=331):



See Table 4 for beta values for these models.